Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 4, line 1 with the following amended paragraph:

--The aforesaid report, which is related to an isolate strain of Lactobacillus acidophilus, LA16, is one of the many works by the research group headed by Dr. Khem M. Shahani on the characteristics and bioactivities of Lactobacillus acidophilus. Specifically, Dr. Shahani's group had conducted fairly extensive researches on the characteristics and bioactivities of a specially isolated and cultured strain of Lactobacillus acidophilus DDS-1 of human origin, including studies on its effect in reducing serum cholesterol level. The DDS-1 isolated strain was later patented (information regarding DDS-1 is available on the website of Nebraska Cultures, Inc., www.nebraskacultures.com.benefits.html).--

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 4 with the following amended paragraph:

--In 1997, M.M. Brashears and S.E. Gililland indicated that *Lactobacillus* exhibited good cholesterol co-precipitation during growth without pH control (*i.e.*, at a normal pH of 4.5 to 5.5). However, if the pH value was maintained at about 6.0, the ability of said bacteria to remove cholesterol is significantly decreased (*M.M. Brashears and S.E. Gililland (1997),* Influences of pH during growth on removal of cholesterol from MRS broth by *Lactobacillus casei* and *Lactobacillus acidophilus*, *Animal Science Research Report,* pp.32-37; www.ansi.okstate.edu/research/1997rr/006.htm).--

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 9, line 5 with the following amended paragraph:

--Further, *L. acidophilus* LA16, the strain isolated from pigs as reported by Danielson et al. in *J. Anim. Sci. (1989), 67:966-974*, and *Lactobacillus acidophilus* DDS-1, an isolated strain of human origin (an endogenous human strain), which was developed by scientists headed by Dr. Khem M. Shahani and which is now a patented product of Nebraska Cultures, Inc., have demonstrated the ability to reduce serum cholesterol (www.nebraskacultures.com/benefits.html).--

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 18, line 1 with the following amended paragraph:

--The basal medium as prepared above was packaged into test tubes in an amount of 4.5 ml basal medium per tube. After being sterilized by autoclaving at 121 °C for 15 minutes, each tube was added with 0.5 ml of a 10% ribose solution that had been sterilized by filtration.
4. Diluent: 0.1% peptone water (BACTO Peptone, Difco Laboratories, Detroit, MI, USA)--

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 39, line 7 with the following amended paragraph:

--This identification test is based on the method described in Rosenblum *et al.* (1997), *Nucleic Acid Res.*, 25: 4500-4504, and it works according to the following operating procedures: A small amount of a freshly cultured bacterial strain is scraped and placed into a 1.5 ml eppendorf tube. After treating the bacterial sample with proteinase K and RNase and using a spin column to obtain the bacterial genomic DNA therefrom, PCR amplification is conducted, followed by purification. After confirmation by electrophoresis, the PCR-amplified products are subjected to reaction with a MICROSEQ 16SrDNA Gene Kit (PE Co., USA), followed by DNA sequencing using the ABI Prism 310 Genetic Analyzer. Furthermore, the 12 strips of DNA sequences thus obtained are analyzed and integrated by using MICROSEQ software (PE Co., USA) to obtain a 16S rDNA sequence of about 1500 bps, said sequence being subjected to a comparison with DNA databases (MICROSEQ Reference Manual, 1999, PE CO., USA).--

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 40, line 5 with the following amended paragraph:

--(iv) The 16S rDNA sequence analysis result of the isolate B21T1 of the present invention is shown in Figure 5. After a comparison with DNA databases (MICROSEQ Reference Manual, 1999, PE CO., USA), it was found that the 16S rDNA sequence (SEQ ID NO:1) of the isolate B21T1 of the present invention is most homologous to the 16S rDNA sequence of *Lactobacillus gasseri* (B_1 group in *Lactobacillus acidophilus*)(G. Klein *et al.* (1998), *International Journal of Food Microbiology.* 41:103-125); and--

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 43, line 12 with the following amended paragraph:

--(iv) The 16S rDNA sequence analysis result of the isolate B21T6 of the present invention is shown in Figure 6. After a comparison with DNA databases (MICROSEQ Reference Manual, 1999, PE CO., USA), it was found that the 16S rDNA sequence (SEQ ID NO:2) of the isolate B21T6 of the present invention is most homologous to the 16S rDNA sequence of *Lactobacillus gasseri* (B_1 group in *Lactobacillus acidophilus*); and--

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 45, line 12 with the following amended paragraph:

--(iv) The 16S rDNA sequence analysis result of the isolate C21T1 of the present invention is shown in Figure 7. After a comparison with DNA databases (MICROSEQ Reference Manual, 1999, PE CO., USA), it was found that the 16S rDNA sequence (SEQ ID NO:3) of the isolate C21T1 of the present invention is most homologous to the 16S rDNA sequence of *Lactobacillus gasseri* (B_1 group in *Lactobacillus acidophilus*); and--

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 47, line 12 with the following amended paragraph:

--(iv) The 16S rDNA sequence analysis result of the isolate X21B7 of the present invention is shown in Figure 8. After a comparison with DNA databases (MICROSEQ Reference Manual, 1999, PE CO., USA), it was found that the 16S rDNA sequence (SEQ ID NO:4) of the isolate X21B7 of the present invention is most homologous to the 16S rDNA sequence of *Lactobacillus gasseri* (B_1 group in *Lactobacillus acidophilus*); and--

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 49, line 12 with the following amended paragraph:

--(iv) The 16S rDNA sequence analysis result of the isolate B38T38 of the present invention is shown in Figure 9. After a comparison with DNA databases (MICROSEQ Reference Manual, 1999, PE CO., USA), it was found that the 16S rDNA sequence (SEQ ID NO:5) of the isolate B38T38 of the present invention is most homologous to the 16S rDNA sequence of *Lactobacillus gasseri* (B_1 group in *Lactobacillus acidophilus*); and--